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They have general terms which represent certain abstractions such as "bird," "fish," "tree," and also particular ones with which they differentiate between particular species. What is more they even have abstract nouns, for in addition to such words as "never," "always," they have others, "fear" for instance, which they call uái, a word which also means "tremor" or "trembling." For earthquake they say hunat uái, which means "earth tremble," just as in Spanish one says "tremor of the earth." Can it be therefore that for the Matacos to fear is to tremble? Is it not in this way, taking the part for the whole, that our own abstract terms came into being in the great majority of cases? Now trembling is one, the commonest, of the many outward manifestations of fear.

I affirm that these Indians are in full possession of the human 151 ●
intellectual faculties and ability to judge rationally, and these developed to such a degree that they can be considered our equals both in their way of reasoning and in their antiquity. The gap which exists between them and us is one which exists only in the actual world of facts and of the ideas which refer to [245] those facts -- a gap which is in no way proportional to that which exists between their intellectual faculties and ours. And this is easily understood. 000

How many years have gone by, how many were and how many are the individuals amongst us who have taken full advantage of the intellectual benefits of science, ethics and higher education generally? Very small in number are they if we take into account the historical antiquity of man and the number of men who have lived. The effects, therefore, of human psysiological traits must have changed the common heritage of humanity in the whole world during the period of its limited civilizations very little, if at all.

The fact of not having reflected on this phenomenon is the cause behind the ignorant persons's astonishment at being confronted with the advanced conditions and relative progress to be found amongst savage peoples.

The short intellectual and moral distance which separates them from us is an eloquent testimony to the hoary antiquity of man, dating back to the separation of man from his pre-human ancestors, which dwarfs into insignificance the few years which separate us from a state of savagery akin to that in which these Indians live.